

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An oxidation reactor comprising a reactor body and a manhole nozzle projecting from the reactor body, a stopper inside the manhole nozzle projecting inwardly from an inner surface of the manhole nozzle and towards the reactor body, in which and a partition plate, also within the manhole nozzle and abutting against the stopper, is provided to separate an inside of the manhole nozzle and an inside of the reactor body from each other.

2. (Currently Amended) An oxidation reactor according to claim 1, wherein the manhole nozzle whose inside is separated from the inside of the reactor body by the partition plate, is provided with a means for feeding an inert gas ~~thereinto~~ into the manhole nozzle.

3. (Original) An oxidation reactor according to claim 2, wherein the inert gas is a nitrogen gas.

4. (Original) An oxidation reactor according to claim 2, wherein the inert gas is a waste gas formed by burning a combustible gas that is obtained after recovering acrylic acid from an oxidation reaction product gas.

5. (Original) An oxidation reactor according to claim 1, further comprising a heating means and/or a heat-retaining means for the manhole nozzle whose inside is separated from the inside of the reactor body by the partition plate.

6. (Original) An oxidation reactor according to claim 1, further comprising a sampling tube for sampling an easily polymerizable compound-containing gas, said sampling tube having a double tube structure capable of feeding a heating medium into an outer tube thereof.

7. (Original) An oxidation reactor according to claim 1, wherein an oxidation catalyst is present within the reactor body.

8.-20. (Canceled).